

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1, 3-10, 12, 13 and 15-22 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 3, 17 and 18 being the independent claims. Claim 15 has been amended to depend from claim 1. Claims 2, 11, 14 and 23 are sought to be cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein.

Claims 1, 8-12 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,012,174 to Rech et al. (hereinafter "Rech"). Claims 1-7 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 1,418,198 to Neppell (hereinafter "Neppell"). Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rech in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,665,458 to Mahn, Jr. (hereinafter "Mahn").

The Examiner has indicated the allowability of claims 18-22. Additionally, the Examiner has indicated the allowability of claims 14-17 if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim.

Based on the above amendment and the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and they be withdrawn.

I. The Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)
Should be Withdrawn and the Application Should be Allowed

Claims 1, 8-12 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Rech. Claims 1-7 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Neppell. Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rech in view of Mahn.

The Examiner has indicated that claim 14 includes allowable subject matter. In order to expedite prosecution, claims 2 and 14 have been cancelled and rewritten in independent form. Claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 2 and the allowable subject matter of claim 14. Therefore, claim 1 is now allowable and, by virtue of their dependency on claim 1, claims 8-10, 12, 13, 15 and 16 are also allowable for at least these reasons.

Further, claim 3 has been rewritten in independent form to include the subject matter of claim 1 and the allowable subject matter of claim 14. Therefore, claim 3 is now allowable and, by virtue of their dependency on claim 3, claims 4-7 are also allowable for at least these reasons.

The Examiner has indicated that claim 17 includes allowable subject matter. In order to expedite prosecution, claim 17 has been rewritten in independent form to include the subject matter of claim 1. Therefore, claim 17 is now allowable.

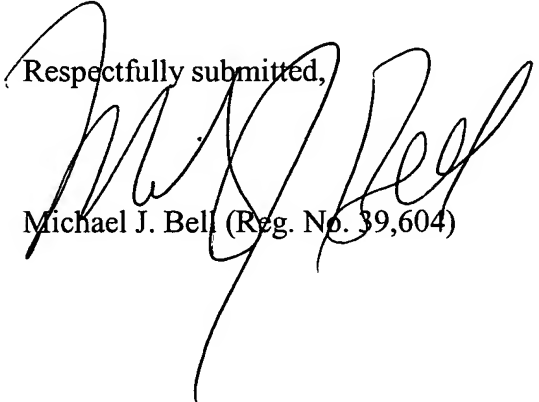
Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a) and issue a Notice of Allowability for claims 1, 3-10, 12, 13 and 15-22.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


Michael J. Bell (Reg. No. 39,604)

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HOWREY LLP
2941 Fairview Park Drive, Box 7
Falls Church, VA 22042
(703) 663-3600